

Message Text

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12

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG

SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRESS ON ABROGATION OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP TREATY

1. SUMMARY: ISRAELI COMMENTATORS VIEW SADAT'S MOVE ABROGATING SOVIET-EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP TREATY AS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH UNDERSCORES POSTWAR EGYPTIAN SHIFT TO WESTERN CAMP. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING BENEFITS OF STRENGTHENED US POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED THAT THE US WILL UTILIZE TREATY ABORGATION AS JUSTIFICATION FOR PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO DEVELOP ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. WASHINGTON BASED REPORTERS CLAIM THAT SADAT'S MOVE WAS COORDINATED WITH ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR ARMS SALES. ISRAELI BELIEVE THAT IMPROVED US/EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP MAY MANIFEST ITSELF IN RENEWED US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL FOR FURTHER TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL CONCESSIONS. PRESS ALSO THINKS THAT EGYPTIAN/SOVET RUPTURE IS NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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FINAL AND THAT US INFLUENCE IN EGYPT MAY ONE DAY BACK-

FIRE ON IT. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL NEWSPAPER EDITORIALIZE ON THE ABROGATION OF THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP TREATY BY SADAT. MAARIV (MARCH 15) EDITORIAL NOTES THAT THE "DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT MERELY CONFIRMS A POLITICAL FACT THAT HAS BEEN NO SECRET FOR SOME TIME NOW. ANNULMENT OF THE FRIENDSHIP PACT WILL STRENGTHEN THE STANDING OF THE US IN THE AREA...." MAARIV HOPES THAT WASHINGTON WILL HAVE THE STRENGTH AND THE WISDOM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW SITUATION (POLITICALLY), AND NOT MERELY TO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE USSR AS AN ARMS SUPPLIER. HAARETZ EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT SADAT WOULD HARDLY HAVE ABROGATED THE TREATY "UNLESS HE HAD RECEIVED VERY SOLID AMERICAN PROMISES TO MAKE SURE THAT HE GETS ARMS FROM AMERICA AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. SADAT'S PRO-AMERICAN IMAGE, WHICH FORD AND KISSINGER CLAIM TO BE PROOF OF THE SUCCESS OF THEIR POLICY, WILL NOW PRESUMABLY BE MORE CREDIBLE TO AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION THAN EVER. ISRAELI ATTEMPTS TO AROUSE DISTRUST OF EGYPT AND ITS RULER WILL HARDLY SUCCEED IN CONVINCING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC..."

3. DAVAR EDITORIAL DOES NOT REGARD THE ABROGATION AS A SURPRISE AND ASSERTS THAT THE "POSITIVE ASPECTS OF SADAT'S TURN TO THE WEST SHOULD...NOT BE DISREGARDED. EVEN IF US VIEWS DO NOT ALWAYS COINCIDE WITH THOSE OF ISRAEL, AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS VASTLY PREFERABLE TO THAT OF THE USSR... ON THE OTHER HAND, SADAT'S STEP WILL DOUBTLESS INCREASE SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO EGYPT AND FOR EXTRACTING CONCESSIONS FROM ISRAEL." HATZOFE EDITORIAL ALSO NOTES THAT ABROGATION OF TREATY WILL HELP SADAT TO IMPROVE HIS RELATIONS WITH THE US. "ISRAEL NATURALLY PREFERS EGYPT TO DEPEND ON THE US RATHER THAN ON THE USSR, BUT WHILE IT IS QUITE EVIDENT THAT THE US WILL HAVE TO PAY FOR THE EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP AND THERE IS NO WAY OF PREVENTING AMERICAN ECONOMIC AID TO EGYPT, ISRAEL MUST CONTINUE...TO FIGHT AGAINST AMERICAN ARMS SUPPLIES TO EGYPT..."

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4. JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL REGARDS THE "DEMONSTRATIVE ABROGATION" AS MORE OF AN EXERCISE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS "THAN A FRESH DEPARTURE IN POLICIES." THE EDITORIAL ALSO CONCLUDES THAT THE "DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT...SERVES AS A SIGNAL TO THE US, AND TO THE ENTIRE WEST, THAT EGYPT'S RIFT WITH THE SOVIETS IS, FOR THE TIME BEING, FIRMLY GENUINE. AND IT IS AN UNMISTAKEABLE INVITATION TO THE WEST, BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE US, TO MAKE GOOD

WITHOUT DELAY THE IMPLICIT PROMISE OF COMPENSATION TO EGYPT FOR HER ACTION IN CONCLUDING THE SINAI AGREEMENT..." THE EDITORIAL MENTIONS THAT RABIN "FORESAW (THE SINAI AGREEMENT) AS A CLEAR CUT GAIN FOR ISRAEL" IN DRIVING A WEDGE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. THE JERUSALEM POST CONCLUDES WITH A NOTE OF WARNING: "IT IS A DANGEROUS MISCONCEPTION TO ASSUME THAT SADAT'S TURNABOUT INEVITABLY SPELLS A COMMITMENT TO THE PURSUIT OF PEACE. HE MIGHT ONE DAY TRY AGAIN THE DECEPTION HE PRACTISED ON ISRAEL THREE YEARS AGO..." AS FOR THE US, THE EDITORIAL CONTINUES, "IT WOULD BE MAKING A FATAL ERROR...IF IT WERE TO CONCLUDE FROM SADAT'S SPEECH THAT AMERICAN STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST...WOULD BEST BE SERVED BY PUMPING EGYPT FULL OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION..."

5. YEDIOT AHARONOT EDITORIAL ADVOCATES CAUTION BECAUSE EGYPT "MAY AGAIN RESORT TO THE SAME TRICK AS IN 1973...", PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF ITS DESPERATE ECONOMIC SITUATION. EDITORIAL ALSO WARNS THAT THE SOVIETS MAY FIND A WAY TO INFILTRATE AGAIN TO EGYPT. AL-HAMISHMAR EDITORIAL STRESSES THAT SADAT WOULD NOT HAVE CUT THE LAST THREAD WHICH STILL ATTACHED HIM TO THE USSR IF HE HAD NOT BEEN SURE THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM AMERICA WHAT HE HAD OBTAINED FROM RUSSIA AND IN ADDITION BENEFIT FROM POLITICAL AID WHICH THE SOVIETS CANNOT PROVIDE.

6. JERUSALEM POST DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT QUOTES ANALYSTS IN JERUSALEM AS INTERPRETING SADAT'S MOVE AS A STEP "TO SWAY AMERICAN OPINION IN FAVOR OF SELLING ARMS TO EGYPT...(THE ANALYSTS) TOOK WITH A GRAIN OF SALT SADAT'S PROTESTATION THAT HIS WEAPONRY WOULD UNCLASSIFIED

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BE 'JUNK' WITHIN 18 MONTHS... THEY...NOTED, TOO, THAT SADAT AND HIS AIDES ARE ENERGETICALLY SHOPPING AROUND FOR ARMS BOTH IN THE EAST AND THE WEST. IT WAS ENTIRELY UNLIKELY THAT EGYPT WOULD FIND ITSELF DEFENSELESS IN THE FUTURE. THEY FEEL, THEREFORE, THAT SADAT'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS CALCULATED TO WIN SYMPATHIC CONSIDERATION FROM THE US POLITICAL AND PUBLIC OPINION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE TO ESTABLISH AN 'ARMS SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP' WITH EGYPT."

7. SEVERAL WASHINGTON BASED ISRAELI CORRESPONDENTS ALSO REPORT REACTIONS IN THE US TO EGYPTIAN MOVE. JERUSALEM POST WRITES THAT "US OFFICIALS WERE OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH SADAT'S ANTI-SOVIET MOVE AND BELIEVE IT MAY CONVINCE LEGISLATORS TO SUPPORT THEIR PROPOSAL

TO SELL SIX C-130 MILITARY TRANSPORT PLANES TO EGYPT...."
DAVAR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT (BARNEA) GOES EVEN FURTHER
AND WRITES THAT "THERE ARE CLEAR SIGNS THAT THE
ANNOUNCEMENT (SADAT'S) AND ITS TIMING WERE COORDINATED
IN ADVANCE WITH THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT
ITS EFFORTS TO CONVINCE THE CONGRESS TO
APPROVE THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT... THE EGYPTIAN ANNOUNCEMENT
HAS EMBARRASSED THE PRO-ISRAELI CAMP IN THE CONGRESS...
BUT SEVERAL SENATORS' ADVISERS HOPE THAT THE IMPRESSION
OF SADAT'S SPEECH, WHICH WAS HEADLINE STORY IN US NEWS-
PAPERS, WILL DIMINISH WITHIN A FEW DAYS AND BE RECEIVED
AS A POLITICAL TRICK MORE THAN AS A SIGNIFICANT
ANNOUNCEMENT..." AL-HAMISHMAR (BLITZER) ALSO INDICATES
THAT THERE WAS COORDINATION BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN MOVE
AND ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS. HAARETZ (MARGALIT) WRITES
THAT "WASHINGTON REGARDS THE ABROGATION...AS A GLORIOUS
POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENT... EVEN SENATOR JACKSON... HAS
DESCRIBED IT AS AN ACHIEVEMENT...."

8. COMMENT SEPTEL.
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